

RESOLUTION NO. 0735-07-09

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS FROM THE CEDAR RAPIDS/LINN COUNTY
COMMUNITY TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE I-JOBS LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE
COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the I-JOBS Local Infrastructure Competitive Grant program was adopted by the State of Iowa Legislature to provide infrastructure investment funding to mitigate disaster recovery from the Flood of 2008, and to provide for employment while stimulating and promoting long term economic growth, and

WHEREAS, the I-JOBS program will provide \$118.5 million to be distributed in competitive grants available for reconstruction of local public buildings and flood control prevention in communities from devastation of the Flood of 2008 throughout the state of Iowa, and the Cedar Rapids/Linn County community will be submitting 23 (twenty-three) competitive grant applications for projects to the I-JOBS Grant Program, including:

- Linn County – Administrative Office – Rebuild and Energy Efficiency
- Linn County – Juvenile Law Center
- City of Cedar Rapids – Reconstruction of Public Parking Ramps
- City of Cedar Rapids – Parking Access Revenue Control System (PARCS)
- City of Cedar Rapids – Downtown Parking Structure
- City of Cedar Rapids – 3rd Street S.E. Streetscape Improvements
- City of Cedar Rapids – Intermodal Transportation Facility (ITF)
- City of Cedar Rapids – Anaerobic Biogas System Improvements
- City of Cedar Rapids – Edgewood Road Reconstruction at Cedar River
- City of Cedar Rapids – 6th Street SW Reconstruction
- City of Cedar Rapids – Highway 100
- City of Cedar Rapids – US Cellular Center Improvements & Events Center Construction
- City of Cedar Rapids – Acquisition of Flood-Blighted Downtown Properties
- City of Cedar Rapids – Façade of Improvement Incentive Program (F.A.C.E.)
- City of Cedar Rapids – Multigenerational Community Life Center – PLAY
- City of Cedar Rapids – Joint Communications Network
- City of Cedar Rapids – Cedar Rapids Public Library Main Facility
- City of Cedar Rapids – Demolition and remediation of the buildings located on the 1100 block of 3rd St S.E. (formerly Quality Chef)
- Cedar Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce – Economic Commerce Center
- African American Heritage Foundation of Iowa – African American Museum
- Legion Arts – Restoration of CSPS Hall
- Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa – JA World
- Indian Creek Nature Center – From Flood to Flowers – Crafting a LEED Nature Center
- Headquarters in the Beauty of Prairie Flowers

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA that the above noted projects are hereby endorsed, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA that submission of applications for the City of Cedar Rapids for the above noted projects are hereby authorized.

Passed this 22nd day of July, 2009.

Voting: Council member Podzimek moved the adoption of the resolution; seconded by Council member Wieneke. Adopted, Ayes, Council members Fagan, Gulick, McGrane, Podzimek, Shey, Shields, Vernon, Wieneke and Mayor Halloran.

Attest:

Kay Halloran, Mayor

Ann Ollinger, City Clerk

July 22, 2009

Doug Neumann
Downtown District
312 Second Avenue SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

Dear Mr. Neumann:

I am writing to offer a downtown developer's perspective on the importance of acquiring blighted properties in the core Cedar Rapids Central Business District. I have developed or redeveloped over 350,000 square feet of space, primarily office but also including service retail and restaurant facilities in and around Cedar Rapids, with the majority being in the heart of the CBD.

Our family's investment in this brick and mortar is well in excess of \$15 million, and we remain committed to doing what we can to help our community recover after the flood. Nevertheless, our resources are finite and any reserves are totally depleted post-flood, as are those of the other major players in rebuilding of our City's downtown. The combination of limited financial resources within the development community and the swath of vacant buildings that remain virtually untouched and abandoned since the disaster, create a recipe for urban decay that threatens our entire community (and as the state's 2nd largest urban center, the ramifications statewide). I do not believe that I am exaggerating the threat, though there obviously are many components to: 1) first stabilizing the out migration from downtown, and 2) dealing with the abandoned properties, in preparation for eventual redevelopment.

The I-JOBs program can provide assistance where no other source currently exists; that being the funds to help acquire, demolish and prepare blighted properties for redevelopment. I believe that this undertaking is the singular most important aspect of securing the future of downtown Cedar Rapids. Without removing the ugly scars of the flood, which permeate our main business district, there will be no resurgence in economic activity, and in fact the downtown will follow the path of other secondary cities that have witnessed the demise of their CBD. Cedar Rapids is on the brink. We need help in this mission critical phase.

Finally, my perspective is not only that of a heavily invested and involved downtown property owner, but also that of a board member of our Municipal district (SSMID), a former board member of the Downtown District and active member of that organization, a member of the small business recovery group supported by the Chamber of Commerce, and an active member of the Chamber, as well as a leading voice on virtually every significant task force or initiative involving downtown Cedar Rapids over the last 20 years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jon".

Jon T. Dusek
President

JTD/kg



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IJOBS Selection committee

RE: Grant application for acquisition of blighted properties – Cedar Rapids

Dear Selection Committee members:

My name is Scott Byers, and I am a 35 year veteran of the commercial real estate and development business in Cedar Rapids. Our company, Iowa Realty Commercial, offices in the downtown and we have 14 commercial specialists for whom I am also writing. It is our professional view that the post-flood landscape in downtown Cedar Rapids makes it nearly impossible for us to secure future quality tenants to the area. There are too many boarded up storefronts and abandoned buildings for us to make the case that the city is back on the move and the central business district is thriving once again. There are entire ½ blocks that are sitting in much the same condition as of June '08, vacant and with owners that have no resources or inclination to restore. Philanthropic persons or institutions have had so many immediate need requests such that the buying and demolishing buildings for eventual re-development does not rise to the level necessary. Yet it is our considered opinion that unless the cancers are removed from the 'body' the patient's future is imperiled.

My perspective as a commercial real estate professional is augmented by experience I have gained as a founding member of the Downtown District board (nee Renaissance Group), a member of the Cedar Rapids Chamber board (twice, and now embarking on a third term), the Co-Chair of the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena campaign, the founder and lead underwriter of the annual sculpture exhibit now in its 14th year downtown, and one of the founders of the Taste of Cedar Rapids festival.

I have staked my business and my personal investment future on Cedar Rapids remaining a viable economic locale. I can report with no equivocation, that this investment is in serious jeopardy. Downtown Cedar Rapids is the heartbeat and signature of this community, and it is terribly scarred. We need financial assistance to complement the other initiatives underway, so that we can begin to look like we are on the right track to future prosperity and growth.

Thank you for your consideration, and more importantly for your funding assistance in removing these blighted properties from our core.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott G. Byers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Scott G. Byers, CCIM, SIOR



Smulekoff's

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Fax (319) 362-2180

July 31, 2009

Doug Neumann
312 2nd Avenue SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

Dear Doug,

I am writing to express my emphatic support to the proposal that the buildings on First street between Third and Fourth Avenues SE be demolished and the land be treated to provide parking until the parking ramp that has been in the planning for many years is finally erected.

There are many reasons why this is both desirable and urgent. The buildings have been deserted and neglected since the flood of last June. There is no intent on the part of the owners to restore them for any use since they are certain that the city will ultimately acquire them for the long-planned parking ramp. The buildings do have tenants of the rodent family. Our employees see these unhealthy pests from time to time, as I am sure visitors to the downtown do also. The buildings thus constitute a health hazard.

Smulekoff's has been open since August 2, 2008. We have spent considerable effort and resources in making our premises inviting and attractive. It is very difficult to achieve our goal when the entire block opposite is an expression of dereliction, destruction and despair. If we are ever to achieve a positive aspect to the downtown area it is important to deal directly with the rehabilitation or removal of severely impacted buildings.

Providing additional off street parking is important since the city apparently has no intention of restoring the First Street Parking Ramp to serve the downtown area. How can the community invite activity downtown if there is no place for visitors to park ? There is scarcely room for downtown business employees to find parking, and almost no off-street parking for customers or attendees of downtown functions.

If there is anything I can do to assist in the effort to remove these eyesores and health hazards, please let me know. I am at your service in this worthy endeavor.

Ann Lipsky